

OCT 25 2004

VIA FACSIMILE 703 872 9306

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Chirnomas  
Serial No.: 10/766,178  
Filed: January 27, 2004  
For: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR  
CONTROLLING RENTED OR LEASED ...

Group Art Unit: 3651  
Examiner: Crawford, G. O.  
Atty Dkt No.: 01PA20AUS01  
Confirmation No.: 3588  
Date: October 25, 2004

Mail Stop ISSUE FEE  
Commissioner for Patents  
PO Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

**AMENDMENT AFTER ALLOWANCE**  
**PURSUANT TO 37 CFR §1.312**

Sir:

Before the Grant of the above-captioned patent application, please add new claims 22-30, as shown on the attached claim pages.

**Reason why the amendment is needed and was not presented earlier:**

While reviewing the allowed claims with the inventor, an "antecedent basis" issue was first discovered, namely that the last paragraph of allowed independent claim 17 recites "*the* owner or operator of the equipment ", without having first introduced "*an* owner or operator". Additionally, the Examiner's Statement of Reasons For Allowance which accompanied the Notice of Allowability, states that one of the unique features of the claimed invention is "*the second* computer being preprogrammed to at least partially disable... ." Applicant believes that this statement indicates a need for more clarity in this claim. Specifically, although in some embodiments of the invention the second computer may also be preprogrammed to provide this function, note that allowed claim 19 requires that it is the first computer that is preprogrammed to provide the at least partial disablement.

Rather than amend allowed claim 17 to resolve these matters, it would be desirable to have a new independent claim like claim 17 which makes these clarifications. It is felt that a new claim that is a combination of allowed claims 17 and 19 would be a cleaner way to accomplish this result.

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Accordingly, presented hereby is a new claim 22, which is similar to a combination of allowed claims 17 and 19, and new claims 23-30 which depend from new claim 22. New dependent claims 23-30 correspond exactly to allowed dependent claims 18-20 and 7-11.

To reduce the amount of work required by the Examiner to consider this amendment after allowance, attached hereto on a separate page is a copy of new claim 22, comparing its language to that of allowed claim 17, where words added in claim 22 are shown in bold and underlined, and deleted words are shown in brackets and strikeout.

Support for the added language which more specifically states that it is the first computer system that is preprogrammed to provide the "at least partial disabling", can be clearly found in the originally filed papers, as follows:

- Allowed claims 4 and 19 state that it is the first computer system that causes the disabling, since it is the second computer system that communicates an enable code to the first computer system to at least partially prevent it (the first computer system) from such disabling.
- As noted throughout the specification, such as at paragraph 552, 613 and 656, preprogramming of an equipment to automatically at least partially disable (e.g., in a vending machine, to selectively stop providing requested product to the user) can be based, e.g., on accumulation to a predetermined value of a given operational parameter of the equipment during operation of the equipment. For example, paragraph 552 clearly states that the control system for controlling the article retrieval mechanism of the vending machine is what is preprogrammed.

**Reason why the new claims are patentable and no additional search or examination is needed:**

The newly presented claims are clearly patentable and no additional search or examination is needed because they basically comprise a combination of the allowed claims 17 and 19. Similarly, new dependent claims 23-30 correspond exactly with allowed dependent claims 18-20 and 7-11. Thus, no additional search or examination is needed.

**Reason why this amendment should be entered:**

In addition to the above-noted reasons outlining why the claims are just now being presented, and why no new search is required and why the claims are patentable, it is noted that no more than a cursory review of the record is necessary, and entry would not involve any materially added work on the part of the office.

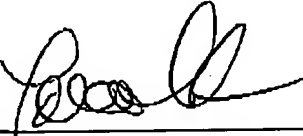
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**Extra Claim Fee:**

Permission is hereby given to charge the small entity extra claim fees, believed to be \$116 (\$44 for one independent claim, plus \$72 for eight dependent claims at \$9 ea.), to applicants deposit account 501960.

Respectfully submitted,

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**CERTIFICATE OF TRANSMISSION**  
**PURSUANT TO 37 CFR §1.8**

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being fax  
transmitted on Oct. 23 2004 to:

703-872-9306

Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Date: Oct. 25, 2004

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